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5-30 June 2017
Agenda item 7
Adoption of the report of the Committee on its fifty-seventh session

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Rodrigo Otávio **Penteado Moraes** (Brazil)

Addendum

Programme questions: evaluation
(*Item 3 (b)*)

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives

1. At its 3rd meeting, on 5 June 2017, the Committee considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives (A/72/72).

2. The Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services introduced the report and, together with representatives of OIOS, responded to questions raised during its consideration by the Committee.

Discussion

3. Delegations noted the continued importance of evaluation in enhancing accountability, efficiency and effectiveness, learning and decision-making across the Secretariat and expressed appreciation for the comprehensive report. Several delegations endorsed the recommendations made in the report, which were aimed at aligning the timing of evaluations, programme planning, budgeting and outputs and at providing greater clarity in the use of evaluation budgets. A delegation enquired as to whether an overlap existed between triennial reviews and annual assessments. Some delegations expressed general satisfaction with the improvements reported in

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the evaluation functions within offices and departments across the Secretariat. A delegation saw the need for more visible follow-up by the offices reviewed.

4. Several delegations sought clarification on whether OIOS had provided guidance to entities on how their reports could be improved. Clarification was further sought on the role of OIOS in undertaking evaluations, conducting follow-up on the gaps raised in the report and its ability to support and guide entities in strengthening their respective evaluation functions. A delegation observed that, in the report, reference had been made to data collection only, and not data processing, and enquired as to how the limitations listed in paragraph 3 of the report were being addressed.

5. Regarding table 1 of the report, a delegation observed that the overall situation had improved since 2015 in terms of the number of entities which had no evaluation unit and no evaluation activity, while cautioning against duplication of efforts and resources with regard to departments with an independent evaluation unit located in duty stations such as New York, which also had an OIOS presence. In that regard, OIOS was encouraged to identify efficiencies, and the need for an independent evaluation unit was questioned. In terms of the Organization's risk management plan the same delegation underlined that more attention should be given to the Department of Management, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in terms of managing extrabudgetary resources.

6. Regarding figures 4 and 5 and paragraph 12 of the report, delegations enquired about the use of a standardized methodology and quality control across entities and about the development of the screening criteria, how they were used and how they were monitored across entities.

7. Several delegations drew attention to the issues discussed in paragraph (d) of the summary and section D of the report regarding how a difference of 90 per cent or more had been observed between resources allocated to discretionary self-evaluation and the costs of producing evaluation reports for 13 entities, thus suggesting the limited accuracy of reported budgets and the inclusion of activities that did not result in the production of evaluation reports under the discretionary self-evaluation allocation. Delegations enquired as to how OIOS had addressed the mismatch between allocated resources and expenditure on evaluations, to ensure better alignment in the future.

8. In reference to paragraph 21 of the report, one delegation enquired as to whether the impact of the revised guidelines issued to budget and evaluation focal points on the reporting of evaluation allocations could be shared before 2019, such as at the first resumed session in March 2018 of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, taking into consideration the fact that the information would feed into the consideration by the Assembly of the various reform initiatives on peacekeeping operations and management planned to be submitted by the Secretary-General.

9. A number of delegations expressed concern over the quality and impact of evaluation reports (including the impact of page limitations placed on putting forward recommendations), and noted in particular the high proportion of non-actionable recommendations emerging from the evaluations, as cited in paragraph 16 of the report. In that regard, delegations sought clarification as to why such recommendations had been considered non-actionable, whether they had been aimed at programmes or subprogrammes, and what measures could be taken to address the issue. Some delegations further noted the high proportion of recommendations that were not implemented and queried whether the low rate of

implementation of recommendations was uniformly problematic across entities or whether certain entities faced the problem more acutely than others.

10. Recalling paragraph 28 of the report, regarding the development of usable recommendations, one delegation remarked that the weak nature of recommendations called into question their value and the utility and impact of reports, which undermined the evaluation function at large, and enquired whether a realistic action plan had been established to improve the implementation of recommendations. Another delegation enquired whether conducting participatory evaluations, as described in paragraph 27 of the report, facilitated the success and utility of evaluations.

11. Some delegations expressed the expectation that evaluation policies and reports should support the Sustainable Development Goals. In this regard, a delegation referred to the United Nations Evaluation Group meeting held in May 2017 in Vienna, which focused on seven of the Goals.

12. Delegations enquired about the entities which had not undertaken any evaluation activity during the biennium, as well as those that did not yet have an evaluation policy. In reference to paragraph 22 of the report, on the limited evaluation practice in some entities, one delegation highlighted the fact that six entities had not submitted reports, despite the allocation of evaluation funds, and underlined the need for an improved mechanism to address that issue and ensure the delivery of expected outputs. One delegation highlighted that the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia had carried out evaluations with limited resources and enquired as to whether other entities could follow that example of good practice. Building on that observation, another delegation enquired as to the existence of a single recommendation on expenditure for the preparation of such evaluations. Some delegations appreciated efforts made by the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services in supporting the establishment of evaluation policies across the six entities, noting the importance of senior management support in establishing an evaluation culture across the Organization, and ensuring that offices involved were "in sync". A delegation requested information on the measures taken by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General to strengthen evaluation.

13. Some delegations objected to the reference in the report, to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people as a vulnerable population or "persons with specific needs", stressing that there was no consensus on the matter. Serious concern was raised over carrying out non-consensual activities and using non-consensual terms in the reports submitted to the Committee for Programme and Coordination. Some delegations noted that LGBT was an agreed United Nations term, as shown by Human Rights Council resolutions 17/19 of 17 June 2011, 27/32 of 26 September 2014 and 32/2 of 30 June 2016.

14. Regarding section V of the report, on the overall quality of reports and selected results from evaluations conducted in 2014-2015, one delegation enquired as to how the ratings of reports could be improved, why there was a quality deficit and about the systematic deficiencies observed in the reports not rated as excellent. Regarding table 2 in the section, the same delegation expressed concern over the fact that many subprogrammes were not included in the evaluation reports produced in 2014-2015 and sought clarification as to the reasons. Regarding paragraph 37 under the section, a delegation sought clarification on "Development of Africa" and whether it was a reference to the offices in the region or to broader considerations in Africa.

15. Recalling figure XII of the report on the distribution of evaluation reports by priority area in 2014-2015, one delegation noted the lower proportion of evaluations

in the area of peace and security, including peacekeeping operations (which had been carried out in the past and made available to the Committee for consideration), giving rise to the concern that the distribution of evaluation activity across the Secretariat did not appear to be commensurate with the high risk rating given to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support in OIOS risk assessments. One delegation requested further clarity on evaluation priority areas such as the development of Africa, peace and security matters, human rights, sexual abuse and exploitation and gender and observed that presenting a better mix of positive, mixed and negative results from the evaluation reports would be more useful, adding that a more analytical approach to reports with a negative result would increase effectiveness and overall performance.

Conclusions and recommendations

16. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly endorse the recommendation contained in paragraph 63 of the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives.**

17. **The Committee noted with appreciation that most entities housed their evaluation function in a dedicated evaluation unit, that the number of entities with evaluation policies and plans had increased and that many entities had established direct reporting lines from the evaluation unit to the head of the entity.**

18. **The Committee expressed concern regarding the finding of the report on the proportion of evaluation recommendations that are not actionable, and recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to ensure that evaluation recommendations are actionable and that evaluation results are utilized in implementing programme priorities and developing budget requests.**

19. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to make better use of in-house expertise in carrying out evaluations in the entities of the Secretariat, in particular the experience available from the internal and external oversight bodies, notably the Office of Internal Oversight Services, the Board of Auditors and the Joint Inspection Unit.**

20. **The Committee stressed the need for improvement in the quality of evaluation and noted that the Office of Internal Oversight Services had identified good practices such as strategic planning and participatory evaluations.**

21. **The Committee reiterated its recommendation that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to take concrete steps to increase buy-in from senior leadership and strengthen the culture of evaluation and accountability throughout the Organization. The Committee highlighted the importance of ensuring that senior managers' compacts include adequate programme objectives and performance measures in order to fulfil given mandates in accordance with the relevant regulations and rules and that the evaluation function receives due consideration in their performance appraisal.**

22. **The Committee emphasized that evaluation was a key function for the adoption of budgetary decisions, since it not only helped to improve programme design and execution, as well as the formulation of policy**

directives, but also contributed to transparency and the efficient use of resources in the effective implementation of intergovernmental mandates.

23. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to take further action to strengthen the evaluation functions, such as the development of evaluation structures in Secretariat entities that currently lack them, the tracking of evaluation workplans and enhancements to staff evaluation expertise.**

24. **The Committee emphasized that the evaluation function, in particular self-evaluation, was an essential managerial tool and that senior managers had a responsibility to use evaluation to improve performance.**

25. **The Committee expressed concern that a large proportion of subprogrammes had not been subject to evaluation reports during 2014-2015 and that some priority areas, such as justice and law and disarmament, had received minimal evaluation coverage.**

26. **The Committee selected the following reviews for consideration at its fifty-eighth session, in 2018: the triennial reviews of the implementation of recommendations from the 2015 evaluations for UNHCR, UN-Women, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the International Trade Centre, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.**

27. **The Committee selected the following evaluations for consideration at its fifty-ninth session, in 2019: the Offices of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, on Sexual Violence in Conflict and on Violence Against Children; the Department of Public Information; the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management; the Office for Disarmament Affairs; the Department of Management; UNHCR; the Office of Legal Affairs and the United Nations Environment Programme.**

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Addendum

Programme questions: proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019

(*Item 3 (a)*)

Report of the Secretary-General on consolidated changes to the biennial programme plan as reflected in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019

Programme 28
Safety and security

1. At its 12th and 13th meetings, on 12 and 13 June 2017, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the report of the Secretary-General on consolidated changes to the biennial programme plan as reflected in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019 (A/72/84 and Corr.1 and 2).

2. The Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security introduced the programme and responded to questions raised during its consideration by the Committee.

Discussion

3. Some delegations expressed appreciation for the efforts made by the Department of Safety and Security in working closely with the Office of Information and Communications Technology to ensure the safety of staff and the security of information. In view of the challenges arising from the different forms of danger and attacks that posed a threat to physical safety and cybersecurity at United

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Nations Headquarters and field locations, clarification was sought regarding the extent of the involvement of the Department in mitigating the risks, particularly in the field, in order to guarantee information security.

4. Some delegations sought further clarification on the difference between the language proposed for removal from programme 28, Safety and security, of the Biennial programme plan and priorities for the period 2018-2019 (A/71/6/Rev.1) and the language proposed for addition to programme 25, Management and support services. As a result of the changes in subprogramme 3, Field support, of programme 28, clarification was sought as to whether the capacity to locate staff members and eligible dependants at all United Nations locations worldwide would remain a function of the Department of Safety and Security, as that was not reflected in the proposal of the Office.

Conclusions and recommendations

5. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the changes to the narrative of programme 28, Safety and security, as set out in the report of the Secretary-General (A/72/84 and Corr.1 and 2) and in section 34, Safety and security, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019 (A/72/6 (Sect. 34)).**

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